

Ther as shynen sterres sevene.
And therto eek, as to my wit,
I saugh a gretter wonder yit,
Upon hir eyen to beholde;
But certeyn I hem never tolde;
for as fele eyen hadde she
As fetheres upon foules be,
Or weren on the bestes four, e
That Goddes trone gunne honoure,
As John writ in thapocalips.
Hir heer, that oundy was and crisps,
As burned gold hit shoon to see.
And sooth to tellen, also she
Had also fele upstonding eres
And tonges, as on bestes heres;
And on hir feet wexen saugh I
Partriches winges redely.

BUT, Lord! the perrie and the richesse
I saugh sitting on this goddesse!
And, Lord! the hevenish melodye
Of songes, ful of armonye,
I herde aboute her throne ysonge,
That al the paleys/walles ronge!
So song the mighty Muse, she
That cleped is Caliopee,
And hir eighte sustren eke,
That in hir face semen meke;
And evermo, eternally,
They songe of fame, as tho herde I:
Heried be thou and thy name,
Goddesse of renoun and of fame!

HO was I war, lo, atte laste,
As I myn eyen gan up caste,
That this ilke noble quene
On hir shuldres gan sustene
Bothe tharmes and the name
Of tho that hadde large fame;
Alexander, and Hercules
That with a sherte his tyf lees!
Thus fond I sitting this goddesse,
In nobley, honour, and richesse;
Of which I stinte a while now,
Other thing to tellen yow.

HO saugh I stonde on either syde,
Streight doun to the dores wyde,
fro the dees, many a pileer
Of metal, that shoon not ful cleer;
But though they nere of no richesse,
Yet they were maad for greet noblesse,
And in hem greet and hy sentence;
And folk of digne reverence,
Of whiche I wol yow telle fonde,
Upon the piler saugh I stonde.

ALDERFIRST, lo, ther I sigh,
Upon a piler stonde on high,
That was of lede and yren fyn,
him of secte Saturnyn,
The Ebrayk Josephus, the olde,
That of Jewes gestes tolde;
And bar upon his shuldres hye
The fame up of the Jewerye.
And by him stoden other sevene,
Wyse and worthy for to nevene,

To helpen him bere up the charge,
Hit was so hevy and so large.
And for they writen of batailes,
As wel as other olde mervayles,
Therfor was, lo, this pileer,
Of which that I yow telle heer,
Of lede and yren bothe, ywis,
for yren Martes metal is,
Whiche that god is of bataile;
And the leed, withouten faile,
Is, lo, the metal of Saturne,
That hath ful large wheel to turne.
Tho stoden forth, on every rowe,
Of hem which that I coude knowe,
Thogh I hem noght by ordre telle,
To make yow to long to dwelle,
These, of whiche I ginne rede.

HER saugh I stonden, out of drede,
Upon an yren piler strong,
That peynted was, al endelong,
With tygres blode in every place,
The Tholosan that highte Stace,
That bar of Thebes up the fame
Upon his shuldres, and the name
Also of cruel Achilles.
And by him stode, withouten lees,
ful wonder hye on a pileer
Of yren, he, the gret Omeer;
And with him Dares and Cytus
Before, and eek he, Lollius,
And Guido eek de Columpnis,
And English Gaufride eek, ywis;
And ech of these, as have I joye,
Was besy for to bere up Troye.
So hevy therof was the fame,
That for to bere hit was no game.
But yit I gan ful wel espie,
Betwix hem was a litel envye.
Oon seyde, Omere made lyes,
feyninge in his poetryes,
And was to Grekes favorable;
Therfor held he hit but fable.

HO saugh I stonde on a pileer,
That was of tinned yren cleer,
That Latin poete, dan Virgyle,
That bore bath up a longe while
The fame of Pius Eneas.

AND next him on a piler was,
Of coper, Venus clerk, Ovyde,
That hath ysowen wonder wyde
The grete god of Loves name.
And ther he bar up wel his fame,
Upon this piler, also hye
As I might see hit with myn ye:
for why this halle, of whiche I rede
Was woxe on highte, lengthe and brede,
Wel more, by a thousand del,
Than hit was erst, that saugh I wel.

HO saugh I, on a piler by,
Of yren wrought ful sternely,
The grete poete, daum Lucan,
And on his shuldres bar up than,
As highe as that I mighte see,

The fame of Julius and Pompee.
And by him stoden alle these clerkes,
That writen of Romes mighty werkes,
That, if I wolde hir names telle,
Al to longe moste I dwelle.

AND next him on a piler stood
Of soulfre, lyk as he were wood,
Dan Claudian, the soth to telle,
That bar up al the fame of helle,
Of Pluto, and of Proserpyne,
That quene is of the derke pyne.

HAT shulde I more telle of this?
The halle was al ful, ywis,
Of hem that writen olde gestes,
As ben on trees rokes nestes;
But hit a ful confus matere
Were al the gestes for to here,
That they of write, and how they highte.
But whyl that I beheld this sighte,
I herde a noise aprochen blyve,
That ferde as ben don in an hyve,
Agen her tyme of out-fleyng;
Right awiche a maner murmuringe,
for al the world, hit semed me.

HO gan I loke aboute and see,
That ther com entring in the halle
A right gret company withalle,
And that of sondry regiouns,
Of alleskinnes condiciouns,
That dwelle in erthe under the mone,
Pore and ryche. And also sone
As they were come into the halle,
They gonne doun on knees falle
Before this ilke noble quene,
And seyde: Graunte us, lady shene,
Ech of us, of thy grace, a bone!
And somme of hem she graunted sone,
And somme she werned wel and faire;
And somme she graunted the contraire
Of hir axing utterly.

But thus I seye yow trewely,
What hir cause was, I niste,
for this folk, ful wel I wiste,
They hadde good fame ech deserved,
Althogh they were diversly served;
Right as hir suster, dame fortune,
Is wont to serven in comune.

NOW herkne how she gan to paye
That gonne hir of hir grace praye;
And yit, lo, al this companye
seyden sooth, and noght a lye.

ADAME, seyden they, we be
folk that heer besechen thee,
That thou graunte us now good
fame.

And lete our werkes han that name;
In ful recompensacioun
Of good werk, give us good renoun.

MERNE yow hit, quod she anon,
Ye gete of me good fame noon,
By God! and therfor go your wey.
Alas, quod they, and welaway!
Telle us, what may your cause be?

FOR me list hit noght, quod she;
No wight shal speke of yow, ywis,
Good ne harm, ne that ne this.

And with that word she gan to calle
hir messenger, that was in halle,
And bad that he shulde faste goon,
Up peyne to be blind anon,
for Eolus, the god of winde;
In Trace ther ye shul him finde,
And bid him bringe his clarion,
That is ful dyvers of his soun,
And hit is cleped Clere Laude,
With which he wont is to heraude
hem that me list ypreised be:
And also bid him how that he
Bringe his other clarion,
That highte Sclaundre in every toun,
With which he wont is to diffame
hem that me list, and do hem shame.

HIS messenger gan faste goon,
And found wher, in a cave of stoon,
In a contree that highte Trace,
This Eolus, with harde grace,
held the windes in distresse,
And gan hem under him to presse,
That they gonne as beres rore,
He bond and pressed hem so sore.

HIS messenger gan faste crye:
Rys up, quod he, and faste hye,
Til that thou at my lady be;
And tak thy clarions eek with thee,
And speed thee forth. And he anon
Took to a man, that highte Criton,
his clarions to bere tho,
And leet a certeyn wind to go,
That blew so hidously and hye,
That hit ne lefte not a skye
In al the welken longe and brood.

HIS Eolus nowher abood
Til he was come at fames feet,
And eek the man that Criton heet;
And ther he stood, as still as stoon.
And herwithal ther com anon
Another huge companye
Of gode folk, and gunne crye:
Lady, graunte us now good fame,
And lat our werkes han that name
Now, in honour of gentilesse,
And also God your soule blesse!
for we han wel deserved hit,
Therfor is right that we ben quit.

AS thryve I, quod she, ye shal faile,
Good werkes shal yow noght availle
To have of me good fame as now.
But wite ye what? I graunte yow,
That ye shal have a shrewed fame
And wikked loos, and worse name,
Though ye good loos have wel deserved.
Now go your wey, for ye be served;
And thou, dan Eolus, let see!
Tak forth thy trumpe anon, quod she,
That is ycleped Sclaunder light,
And blow hir loos, that every wight